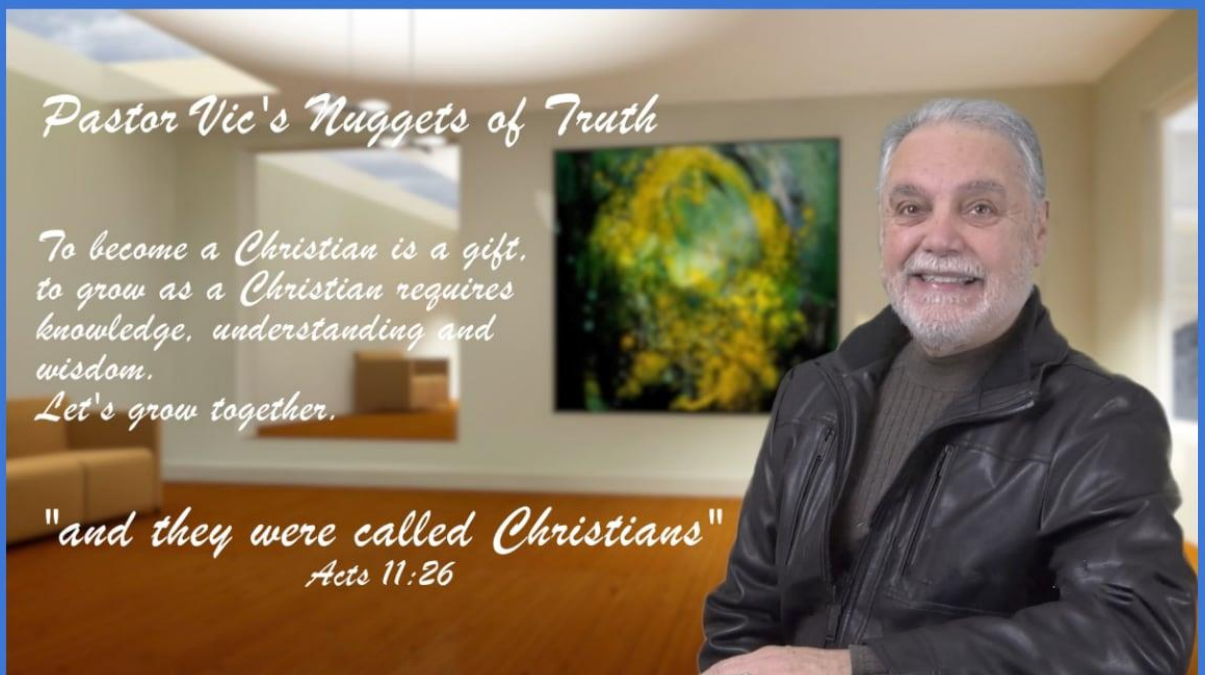


The Pastor's Call



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Confidence in the Pastor's Call

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For World MAP

RSS

Updated May 2019

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CONFIDENCE IN THE PASTOR'S CALL - INTRODUCTION

1.- CONFIDENCE...

As believers in Jesus Christ and ministers of the Gospel, we all share in the desire to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). The parable of the Talents (Matthew 25) illustrates the importance of taking what we are given by God and multiplying it. **We are given according to our ability** to handle what God gives us, "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey" (Matthew 25:15). The one who had five talents doubled it. The one who had two talents doubled his as well. However, the one with one talent hid his for fear of losing it. All three servants knew what the master expected, and yet the servant with one talent did not multiply his gift. As ministers, we are not to operate in fear like the servant with one talent, but we are to walk with **confidence** that comes as a result of **knowing God** and **knowing His purpose or plan** for our life and ministry. God's promise is that if we know our God in a personal way and know the plans, He has for us, we will do great exploits with Him (Daniel 11:32).

Many motivational speakers have much to say about confidence, for example:

1. Believe in yourself!
2. Think positive!
3. Be all you can be!
4. Self-confidence is the key to success!

While there is some truth to these expressions, they all have one thing in common, these expressions speak about **confidence in yourself and your ability**. Is this what the Bible teaches? The Bible does not teach that we should have confidence in our own abilities. The Bible does teach that our **confidence comes from having a relationship with God!**

2.- AS LEADERS, CONFIDENCE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT INSPIRES OTHERS TO FOLLOW...

We see confidence in many of the Old Testament characters like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Esther, and David; we also see confidence in Jesus, the Apostles, John the Baptist, and many others in the New Testament. Despite their human weaknesses, they exhibited confidence or assurance that inspired others to follow. **With confidence, we display enthusiasm, joy, strength, and boldness. As pastors and leaders being able to inspire others to follow is essential to the ministry. You will not be able to be effective without a confidence based on a relationship with Jesus.**

3.- THE WORD CONFIDENCE IN THE BIBLE...

Before we examine this **topic of Confidence**, let us look at what the Bible says about confidence. The word confidence or variation of that word is used over 50 times in the Bible.

Since it is used often, we need to understand what God means by confidence. In this message, we are not treating confidence and faith in the same way. **Faith is of the Spirit, while confidence is of the soul** (or natural).

- a. Faith is a key ingredient in knowing God, believing the Scriptures, and hearing God's voice. **We also know that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6).**
- b. On the other hand, confidence is that **assurance that develops because God has been faithful so many times in the past that we have no doubt that He will be faithful now and in the future.**

As we have just said, **faith moves God** because it is spiritual. **On the other hand, confidence moves people** because it is of the soul. As a minister or leader, this is an essential characteristic to develop. **If no one is following you, then you are not leading.**

- **The true believer puts his confidence in God and will never be ashamed** (Romans 10:11). If we are going to have confidence or trust in something, let us put our confidence in the Lord. **"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."** (Psalms 118:8-9).
- **The Apostles Peter and John displayed amazing confidence before the Sanhedrin because they were confident in their relationship with Jesus** (Acts 4:13). Their confidence and boldness caused the Pharisees to recognize that although they were uneducated, they displayed confidence as a result of having been with Jesus. **This confidence stirred up many to believe in Jesus Christ.**
- We can be confident because of our relationship with Jesus that, **we will be able to approach the throne of grace and be confident** that we will receive mercy and grace in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).
- We can be confident in God's promise that **He will work in the lives of His sons and daughters** (Phil 1:6).
- We can be confident that He will never **leave us nor forsake us** (Hebrews 13:5, Deut 31:6).
- We can be confident that **if we are in God's will, no one can stand against us** (Romans 8:31).
- When we put our trust or **confidence in the Living Word (Jesus)** and the **written Word (Bible)**, our lives will take on a new level of integrity, boldness, stability, and confidence to lead.
- The Bible teaches that there are some things we should **not** have confidence in, i.e.:
 - a. Philippians 3:3 says that we are not to have confidence "in the flesh ."That means our own **understanding** (Proverbs 3:5),
 - b. ... our own **strength** (Isaiah 31:1),
 - c. ... or our own **ability** (Zech 4:6b).

4.- CONFIDENCE ON THREE LEVELS...

How can we, as ministers, grow in faith to inspire confidence in others to follow our leadership? Our faith and confidence will grow as we take these three steps:

1. Grow in our confidence in our **relationship with Jesus Christ**. This is the **cornerstone of ministry** (Matt 21:42, Acts 4:11, Eph 2:19).
2. Grow in our confidence in the **Call of God** upon our life. This is the **foundation of ministry** (Luke 6:48, 1 Cor 3:9-15).
3. Grow in confidence in the **spiritual Anointing** God has given us **to do the work of the ministry**. This is the **building or structure** (Eph 4:12-16) of ministry.

5.- A SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATION OF CONFIDENCE...

A good illustration of this progression in building confidence is found in 1 Samuel 17, the **well-known account of David and Goliath**. Young David did not just appear on the battlefield to confront Goliath the Philistine, and a **history of finding God faithful** ultimately led David to a very public victory. **Before every public victory, there must be a series of private victories.**

- How was David, a simple shepherd boy, able to defeat the giant Goliath, a warrior from his youth? It started with David's personal relationship with God, "Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; **and the Lord is with him**" (1 Samuel 16:18).
- Then followed the faith-building episodes of defeating the lion and the bear while protecting his father's sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-37).
- Finally came the **confidence** to defeat the giant Goliath, who was a warrior from his youth. This total defeat of Goliath, in turn, **inspired** the armies of Israel to defeat the Philistine army (1 Samuel 17:45-54). David did not waver or doubt; his confidence was in his God!

You see, David allowed God to prepare him in the private times for the great public battle with Goliath. **David's confidence started when he decided to pursue his relationship with God.**

Pastors and leaders, don't neglect your personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ; it is the **cornerstone** of your life and ministry.

6.- WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH, HOPE, AND CONFIDENCE?

Defining Faith

Some might say, "Isn't faith and confidence the same thing"? The answer is they are not quite the same. Faith is spiritual; confidence is of the soul. There may be times that they look alike, but there is a difference.

Faith is now! It is a present action, which means it is not the anticipation of something in the future (that is, hope, as we will see later). You cannot have a righteous confidence unless you are a person who will **"Walk by faith and not sight"** (2 Corinthians 5:7). You cannot walk by faith unless your hope is in God's promises, which are found in the scriptures.

Hebrews 11:1, **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** This often-quoted verse requires some explanation. We understand that faith is required of us as Christians but do you realize that **faith is a spiritual attribute (evidence of things not**

seen)? It is not simply a determination of the soul. In other words, I cannot **will** faith into existence. **Faith is the spiritual assurance that God will fulfill His Word.** Faith needs something to hope for, and we hope for the thousands of promises God has made in the scriptures.

Defining Hope

Hope is different from faith in that **faith is now, while hope is in the future.** Hope has a sense of anticipation of something good to come, and faith takes hope and makes it present. **Faith always has a sense of now!** Faith is spiritual because it is **"the evidence of things not seen" or, in other words, spiritual.** Scripture tells us that faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6) and that God is spirit, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). **Therefore, we please God spiritually by faith, which is prompted by hope, stirred up by the Word of God.**

Defining Confidence

If faith is spiritual, then what is confidence? **Confidence is natural and, therefore, of the soul. It is an assurance based upon faith tested and proven reliable and true.** Righteous confidence is built upon faith, and faith is built upon the hope provided by the scriptures. That is why **"...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17).

To be a minister of confidence-inspiring others, you must be a person of faith. This kind of faith must spring forth from hope, the type of hope that the Word of God provides.

There is no way to become **confident in ministry** unless you are **confident in your Calling.** There is no way to be confident in your Calling unless you are **confident in your personal relationship** with God through the finished work of Jesus Christ and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, **your relationship** with Jesus Christ is the **Cornerstone** of your life (As He is the Cornerstone). Knowing your **Calling** is the **foundation** that is built on the cornerstone. Finally, the **Ministry** can now be **built** upon a sure foundation of solid rock.

You must first be **confident** of your salvation, secondly **confident** of your calling to the ministry, and finally **confident** that you have been anointed or spiritually equipped to do the ministry effectively.

Doing the work of the ministry with confidence is available to all of us who desire to serve God and His church, but we must be willing to do the ministry God's way. ***If we sow the Word, we will reap hope; if we sow hope, we will reap faith, if we sow faith, we will reap confidence, if we sow confidence, we will reap a destiny.*** *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).*

7.- PRINCIPLE OF PRIORITIES...

There is a concept known as the **Principle of Priorities**; this simply means you must do **first things first**. In any long-term effort or project, there are lists of things that must be done. The wise man is able to discern the order in which these things must be done. You cannot work backward from success and then do the things you should have done along the way.

It is only natural that many of us want to have a mega-church or mega-ministry, write books read by millions, and a TV ministry when we begin. Those things may come, but first things first. You will, in all probability, face challenges, disappointments, discouragement, and doubts, and these are all part of God's school of ministry. You cannot get to the goal or prize without going through the pain of God's teaching, discipline, and chastisement.

The Apostle Paul said it best when he described how he looked at the ministry, “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

These realities are not meant to discourage but encourage you because our focus must be on the goal. **Our goal is to hear the words,** “well done good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:21).

What you experience is no different from any other believer or ministry leader. There are no quick paths to success or avoiding God's training. After all, God is entrusting to your care the most important thing to Him- **His bride, the church.**

8.- THE PASTOR’S CONFIDENCE IS THREEFOLD;

1. **Confidence in Jesus** through what He has done and the **relationship** we now have with Him.
 1. Our salvation
 2. Our position with God as **sons** (daughters)
 3. Our position in the New Covenant the Covenant of Grace.
 4. Our position in having open communication with the Lord (1Cor. 2)
 5. Our position in the Holy Spirit in us and through us.
 6. Our position in the Bible
2. **Confidence in the Call of God** enables us to do the work of the ministry with an anointing, the Holy Spirit empowering us.
 1. Having assurance that the **Lord has called us.**
 2. Our ministry assignment is knowing to whom and what we have been **called to.**
 3. Recognizing that we are called to be ministers of the **New Covenant.**
3. **Confidence to do the ministry** is the fulfillment or integration of both our Confidence in Jesus and Confidence in our Call.
 1. The Christian ministry is a **spiritual battle!**

2. The struggles we experience are often in our own minds.
3. The pattern for building a ministry, Ephesians 4
4. Becoming a "voice for God and not simply an echo of man"

9.- CONCLUSION:

The difference between faith and confidence is subtle. As leaders, you can be in faith and not be confident; you can be confident and lack faith. **God is looking for leaders who walk by faith and are confident in their relationship with Him.**

Doing first things first ensures success in the next step or phase of ministry. "If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success" (Eccl 10:10). Before doing ministry, make sure your relationship with Jesus is secure. His Holy Spirit is the one who will guide you and empower you.

PART 1- CONFIDENCE IN JESUS

1.- OUR CORNERSTONE – CONFIDENCE IN JESUS

As we have said in the introduction, you can't have confidence in ministry until you are confident of the Call upon your life. You can't have confidence in the Call until you have confidence in your relationship with Jesus Christ- **You must be born-again!** The most important thing that a believer, pastor, or leader must do is establish their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and His Word.

2.- DO YOU KNOW HIM?

Do you know Jesus, or do you just know about Jesus? This brief statement holds the key or is the cornerstone to successful ministry. To build a ministry, you must have a foundation; in order to have a strong foundation you must have a cornerstone (the first stone placed in a foundation). The cornerstone determines that the foundation will be "true ." "This is the 'stone (Jesus) which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:11-12).

This may be difficult to believe, but there are many believers and even ministers who know **about Jesus** and serve Him based on their understanding. This is called religion, and the word religion in this sense means a **formal, ritualistic, outward form without knowing the substance of Jesus Himself.**

- The Apostle Paul wrote Acts 10:34 to refute the claims of some that acceptance by God was by works, genealogy, or training. God is no respecter of persons, and the only thing that matters to the Father is, **"do you know Jesus."**

What Jesus desires from His followers is not religion, as just defined, but **a relationship**. A relationship implies **communication**, and true communication involves a dialogue. We speak, and we are confident that He hears us; He speaks, and we are confident that we hear Him.

Prayer is very important to us as Believers, but prayer is often one-way. We pray, and He hears. Do we take the time to be quiet and **expect** to hear from Him? **When we also hear from Him, we have the beginning of a relationship!**

3.- OUR POSITION AS SONS

Apostle Paul's Teaching on the believer's relationship as sons

In the very last chapter of the Book of Acts, in the last verse of the chapter, the Scripture says of the Apostle Paul that he, "**preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him**" (Acts 28:31).

- People we want to share Jesus with often hold tightly to mistaken ideas about who God is. Our genuine confidence in the Gospel is the very tool or weapon that creates doubt in the unbeliever's mind. Creating this doubt or uncertainty in others is a doorway to reaching the lost. **Our confidence in the truth of Jesus Christ becomes like a life preserver** to those who are lost and drowning in sin.
- Then in Ephesians, we see in whom Paul's confidence lay, in Jesus Christ alone. "In whom we have boldness and access with **confidence** through **faith in Him**" (Ephesians 3:12).
- Paul restates in clear terms who his confidence is in. His faith is not in a church building, a denomination, or the beliefs of some leader. **Paul's faith is in one person- "Jesus Christ and Him crucified"** (1Corinthians 2:2).

1.- Your Position As A Son

The ministry of Paul was characterized by the personal trait of confidence. This confidence was more than a boldness or recklessness. **This confidence was born out of Paul's understanding of who he was in Jesus Christ.** Paul understood that being a Believer in Jesus meant more than conquering sin and death. Paul understood that being a Believer meant that **he was "called" to live in a new position** for the rest of his life. This new position in life **was to live as a son!** A son whose father is God.

1. Jesus is The Son of God, and we are His brothers.

- a. "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many **sons** to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason **He is not ashamed to call them brethren**" (Hebrews 2:10-11).
2. We are adopted as sons.
 - a. "Having predestined us to **adoption as sons by Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," (Ephesians 1:5).
 - b. "But as many as received Him, to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

3. Because of our son-ship position, we have **access to God**.
 - a. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).
4. **As sons, we are called to serve.**
 - a. Parable of the two sons, Matthew 21:28. A son always obeys his father.

Son vs. Stranger

We often define ourselves by what we do for a living. If asked, "who are you"? Some would answer, "I am a plumber, businessman, teacher, or minister. Paul did not define himself by what he did for a living or his ministry, but he defined himself by what God said of him. **God said he was a son**, and therefore, Paul chose to live as a son! Paul saw himself as a son who chose to serve his Father. Isn't this what Jesus demonstrated for us throughout His life in His obedience to Father God? "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

2.- Let's take a closer look at God's idea that we are sons in Galatians 3:26-29.

"For you are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".

- Notice in verse 28 God makes no distinction of position, gender, status or reputation. **All that is required is to be in Christ.**
- Notice also that **God does not distinguish between male or female.** That means that **sonship is not about gender but position in Christ.** It may seem odd to us, but it is perfectly acceptable to God that a female can be **a son in position!**
- In verse 29, **sons are declared to be heirs.** That means we have access to the promises of God **because only sons inherit.**

3.- Paul continues to teach about son-ship in Galatians 4:4-7

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons.** 6 **And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son** into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and **if a son, then an heir of God through Christ**".

1. Confidence happens when you understand that **your** identity is to live by faith as a son!
 - a. You are not defined by what you do for a living, but by what God says of you... **you are a son!**

b. An illustration of believing God- Private Chauvin

In the early 1800s, there was a story about Nicolas Chauvin, a private in Napoleon Bonaparte's army. Private Chauvin stood at attention while King Napoleon reviewed the troops riding on his white horse. For some reason, the horse became startled, Napoleon dropped the reins, and the horse ran out of control with Napoleon still on the horse. Immediately Private Chauvin ran after the King, grabbed the reins, calmed the horse, and brought Napoleon to safety.

Napoleon said, "What is your name soldier"? To which Chauvin said, "My name is **Private** Chauvin, sir." The King then said, "Thank you **Captain** Chauvin." Immediately Chauvin went to his quarters, took off his enlisted uniform, and replaced it with an officer's uniform, that of a Captain! His fellow soldiers began to ridicule him and challenged his right to wear the uniform of an officer. To which Captain Chauvin said, "I have the right to wear this uniform because **My King called me Captain**"! Your King calls you son!

2. As a son, you inherit the promises of God.
 - a. **Your Father is God** (Matt 5:16, Matt 5:48, Matt 6:1, Matt 6:8, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:36).
 - b. **You have access to the Throne Room of God** (John 14:6, Eph 2:18, Eph 3:12).
 - c. **God's Holy Spirit dwells in you** (Rom 8:9, Rom 8:11, 1Cor 3:16, 1Cor 6:19, Eph 5:18, 2Tim 1:14).
 - d. **Supernatural power and authority are available to fulfill God's ministry, mission, or assignment** (Luke 10:19-20, John 16:7, Acts 1:8, 2Cor 12:9, 1John 4:4).
 - e. **You are anointed for service** (2Cor 1:21)

Jesus Christ purchased your Position as a son. His death on the cross of Calvary opened a door into a **New Covenant** that describes our new relationship with God.

4.- OUR POSITION IN THE NEW COVENANT

The study of covenants or Covenant Theology is beyond the scope of this article. Please see the article entitled **Covenants: God's Plan Revealed for further teaching on this subject**.

The Bible as Covenants

As believers, it is important to know which covenant we are under. Knowing our covenant determines the doctrines or truths that we are called to function in. As you know, the sacred Scriptures are divided into two significant divisions, the **Old Testament and the New Testament**. The Old Testament is composed of 39 books, and the New Testament is composed of 27. All of the books of Scripture are God-inspired (2Tim 3:16).

The word "testament" means *witness, testimony, or covenant*. In other words, we could rightly call the two major sections of Scripture the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant." As a matter of fact, the word testament is used only two times in the Bible (Heb 9:16, 17), while the word covenant is used 316 times in the Bible.

Covenants in the Scriptures are of primary importance to every believer. Learning about covenants is vital to understanding God's eternal plan of salvation for mankind. It is also vital to understand what God expects from us and what we can expect from Him.

Here are some key elements all believers must know.

1. We find covenants throughout the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Yet their significance is not always apparent to us. The general concepts of covenants, and the specific details of each covenant made between God and man, are important to study.
2. Foundational to our study of covenants is knowing that God is a Covenant-**Making** and a Covenant-**Keeping** God. Our God makes promises. Then He makes an oath upon Himself – since there is nothing greater (**Heb 6:13**) – that He will fulfill His promises. God is the supremely all-powerful Being in the universe, and He has all the power and authority needed to fulfill His promises to mankind.

1.- Covenant Theology

In the Bible, there are covenants between men, tribes, and nations. The Bible is actually a record of many different covenants. The Covenants made between God and people are the most important covenants for us to study.

There are **eight covenants** that God made with man and mankind, but for our purposes we will take a brief look at two.

1. **The Mosaic Covenant: a *Covenant of Law*** made with mankind through Moses. Commonly referred to in the Bible as simply the Law.
2. **The New Covenant or the Better Covenant: a *Covenant of Grace*** made for mankind through Jesus Christ. This is the covenant in which we, as Believers, live today.

It is important to note that the Bible has the most to say about these two covenants. The Mosaic Covenant (Law) extends from Exodus to Malachi, 38 of the 39 Old Testament books. **The entire New Testament is about a better covenant, the Covenant of Grace.**

What Is A Covenant?

1. A covenant is a **binding contract** or agreement between two people or two groups, and it involves promises on the part of each to the other. For example, when an employer hires a worker, a verbal or written contract is made or "cut."
2. A biblical covenant implies much more than a contract or simple agreement. A covenant is between two individuals (called **covenant heads**) but can extend for generations.
3. A covenant covers a person's **total being** and even includes family members, clan members, and all of their possessions. This last point is very important to understand. **A covenant extends to every person connected to the covenant head.** Today **our covenant head is Jesus**; therefore everything Jesus purchased has been provided to us. **As born-again believers, we are in His family.**

2.- God Says What He Means

- God is not like a man (**Num 23:19**). God makes promises, and He has the **authority** and **power** to keep them all. **When God makes a formal promise to mankind, it is called a covenant.**
- When we understand that God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, we begin to see the Bible as a unified, logical revelation of God's purpose, plan, and program.

- It is knowing God as a covenant **keeper** that causes our faith to grow and mature. We will recognize the faithfulness of God toward His Word: *“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11).*
- As we embrace and stand upon God’s Word, we will see Him perform it!

3.- Conditional (Law) vs. Unconditional (Grace)

1. A covenant can be either conditional or unconditional. A **conditional** covenant exists when both parties agree to do certain things. For example, an employer agrees to pay wages **if** the worker performs specific tasks over a period of time.
2. An **unconditional** covenant is when one party agrees to do certain things (a promise) whether or not the other party performs any function or work. The covenant is not dependent on the ability of the weaker party to perform a function or duty. In other words, **the stronger covenant head extends favor or grace to the weaker covenant head.**
3. **Grace** can be defined as **favor or kindness shown to a person without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and despite what that same person deserves.**

Now, What Are The Conclusions We Can Draw?

1. Our Bible contains two divisions, which correspond to the Old Testament (The Law, Mosaic Covenant) and the New Testament, all of which is about God's Grace.
2. In any Biblical covenant, there are always two parties called **Covenant Heads**. One of the covenant heads is always God.
 - In the Old Testament (Law), the covenant heads are **God and Moses**.
 - In the New Testament (Grace), the covenant heads are **God and Jesus**.
3. Because **Moses was a covenant head** of the Law and the **Law was a conditional covenant**, all the benefits, blessings of obedience as well as the curses that come with disobedience that applied to Moses **also applied to all the Jews** (Deut 28).
4. Because **Jesus was a covenant head** of the New Testament, the Covenant of Grace is unconditional. All the benefits and blessings extend to each person who is **born-again and calls Jesus Lord and Savior**, *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26).*
5. Because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), the **Old Testament promises are still in effect for the Jews**. Likewise, the **New Testament promises are still in effect to anyone (Jew or Gentile) who is born-again.**
6. Finally, you can see why the New Testament is also called the **Better Testament or Covenant**.
 - For an individual under the Law, it depends on a **man’s ability** to keep the law.
 - For an individual, under Grace, it depends on **Jesus’ ability** to keep the covenant. Neither of the two covenant heads in the New Covenant can fail, God the Father and Jesus Christ!

4.- The Better Covenant

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers in Jerusalem, just as the book of Romans was written to Gentile believers. Keep in mind that Hebrews was a letter written in about 65AD; Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in 70AD.

The purpose of Hebrews was to demonstrate that everything the Jews trusted in was passing away and that something better was in place- The New Covenant.

1. We are "called" to be **ministers of the New Covenant**.
 - "who also made us sufficient as **ministers of the new covenant**, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).
 - "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This **cup is the new covenant in My blood**. - This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
2. The keyword in the Book of Hebrews is Faith, but the second keyword is the word, **better**. The New Testament (Grace) is better than the Old Testament (Law). The word better is more properly understood as stronger and **is used 13 times**. In Hebrews. The writer of Hebrews states that Jesus represents a better high priest, better covenant, a better sacrifice, a better temple, and better sacrificial instruments.
 1. Hebrews 1:4, Hebrews 6:9, Hebrews 7:7, Hebrews 7:19, Hebrews 7:22, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 9:23, Hebrews 10:34, Hebrews 11:16, Hebrews 11:35, Hebrews 11:40, Hebrews 12:24.

The New Covenant did something none of the other covenants could do.

1. The New Covenant was not a covenant between God and man, But between **God and Jesus**. Therefore, failure was impossible because, in a real sense, **God was making a covenant with Himself!**
2. Because Jesus is a covenant head, **everyone in Jesus' family is covered**. This is the essence of Grace, unconditional favor or blessing. Every believer is **born-again** and adopted into the family of God as **Sons**, and that is why it is so important to see yourself as a son.
3. An important aspect of being born-again is that the **Holy Spirit (who is God) comes to live in you**. At that moment, the process of transformation begins to take place. Not a legalism of conformity, but a changed heart! No longer a heart of stone but a heart of flesh desiring to love Jesus and follow Him (2Cor 3:3, Eze 11:19, Eze 36:26).
4. God loves all of mankind. Being born-again doesn't make you more loved, but only those who have access to covenant rights are called righteous. **You cannot be more righteous than you are in Christ...** no works can improve your righteous standing or position as a son.
5. We can't break the New Covenant; we can choose to accept it, or walk away from it. The **New Covenant is sealed by the finished work** accomplished by the perfect life of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.
6. **The death of the testator (Jesus) opens the Will**. We are coheirs with Jesus. We become joint-heirs because of His death (Hebrews 9:16-17).

5.- Don't settle for the shadow!

The existence of a shadow implies that the real is present, and only the real can cast a shadow. As we read the Old Testament, we can see, as a shadow, Jesus and the New Covenant, which was coming.

1. Hebrews 8:6 & 13 states that **the (old) Levitical priesthood and its system were obsolete and passing away.**
2. Jesus proclaimed, "**it is finished!**" As He died on the cross of Calvary (John 19:30)
3. The **veil was torn at Jesus' death**, signifying a break from the old to something new (Matt 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45).
4. You don't put new wine into an old wineskin. **You cannot mix the New Covenant life with Old Testament practices** (Matt 9:17, Mark 2:22, Luke 5:37).

The Old Testament is a valuable resource for examples and illustrations, **but it must be in the New Testament that we draw the truths of life and ministry.** An important truth that cannot be overlooked is that when Jesus ascended to the Father, **He sent his Holy Spirit to dwell in us**, to lead us, and to give us power and authority on this earth (John 16:1-15).

5.- OUR POSITION IN COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

The study of spiritual communication is beyond the scope of this article. Please see the article entitled **The Spiritual Life for further teaching on this subject.**

Spiritual Communication With God

I was raised in a family where my parents were both deaf-mutes (they could not speak or hear). They communicated with each other and other deaf-mutes by using their hands to indicate letters and words. This is known as American Sign Language, or ASL. Since I was the firstborn child, I naturally learned to communicate using this form of sign language before I even learned to speak. In a sense, my vocal abilities and hearing abilities were useless in trying to communicate with my parents. In the same way, their signing abilities would have been useless in trying to communicate with a non-signing person. The problem was not a lack of communication but an inability to discern or understand the correct **mode of communication.**

In the same way, we often try to use the wrong senses to communicate with God. We try to use our natural senses to communicate with **God, who is Spirit** (John 4:24). Yet He has given us supernatural or spiritual abilities to communicate with Him.

1.- Levels Of Communication

Let us now examine the various God-given levels of communication of which we are capable.

A. The Body

Our physical body communicates with the physical realm or the physical world we live in. The body uses the five senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Through these senses, we communicate with the physical realm.

Our hearing responds to sound waves that fall within specific frequencies. We hear loud sounds, soft sounds, low- and high-pitched sounds. With our vision, we are able to discern shapes, shades, colors, and movement. Our taste buds are able to detect sweet, sour, and bitter. With our nose, we can distinguish odors, from the pleasant scent of flowers to the smell of rotting eggs. And finally, with our sense of touch we can distinguish cold, heat, pain, and pleasure.

The body itself does not evaluate the source, danger or pleasure of the stimuli. The body simply alerts the brain, which is part of the soul, to be aware of the stimuli; then, the brain reacts. Since we live in the world, God has given us the ability to detect and react to the world we live.

B. The Soul

Notice that the body is not responsible for interpreting or evaluating the meaning of all the stimuli. All the body knows is, "That hurts!" or "It is sweet!" or "That is loud!" The soul is where all the stimuli that the body experiences are put into context. That is, the soul assigns meaning to the stimuli. For instance, the soul "learns" that the sound of a gunshot means danger and reacts accordingly by telling the body to run or hide. It is this learning process in life that shapes our emotions (feelings), our will (the ability to choose), and our intellect (intelligence). Our personality is shaped by our soul. Just as the soul interacts with the physical world through the body, the soul also interacts with other souls or people through the body as well.

C. To sum up so far:

The body interacts or communicates with the physical world, and the soul also interacts with the physical world. More importantly, the soul can interact with the souls of others. In other words, the soul of one person "communicates" with another person's soul with the words and the responses of each individual. Relationships are built on this type of "soul" communication.

D. The Spirit

If the body communicates with the physical world, and the soul communicates with the "soul" world, with what or with whom does the spirit communicate? The answer is obvious, isn't it? **The spirit of man has the potential to communicate with the spiritual realm.**

If we carefully study 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, it should become evident that God has given us,

as believers, the ability to do what was not possible before Jesus Christ and the Cross of Calvary: **to see, hear and comprehend spiritual things on an individual level.** We have been given the “*mind of Christ*” (v.16). Verse 12 states, “*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*”

Let us examine more closely this passage in 1 Corinthians 2. “*But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him’*” (1Cor 2:9). “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard*” obviously speaks about the physical senses, the domain of the body. “*Nor have entered into the heart of man*”: **The heart, in this case, refers to the mind or emotions, and these are in the realm of the soul.** This verse clearly states that we are limited in our own physical and intellectual ability to comprehend the things of God. But, hallelujah! God has given us His Spirit: “*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God*” (1Cor 2:12). God has made **everything we need** available to us, His children, as it pertains “*to life and godliness*” (2Pet 1:3).

We are reminded again in 1 Corinthians 2:13 that communication with God is not about human intellect or man’s wisdom, but His Spirit teaching our spirit: “*These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*” **The Bible then reveals that a non-spiritual (natural, unsaved) man cannot discern the things of the Spirit:** “*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (1Cor 2:14).

Finally, we are assured that we have the mind of Christ! “*But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ*” (1Cor 2:15,16). Hallelujah, can you understand what is being said? We – you and I as believers – have the mind of Christ!

As with any gift of God, we must learn how to exercise and use our spiritual senses. Jesus states, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*” (John 10:27). We naturally know how to communicate physically and intellectually from childhood. **Learning to communicate spiritually, however, requires that we become like children (Matt 11:25; 18:1-5) and trust what God has said in His Word.** If God has said it, then that settles it! He has said that those who walk by the Spirit are sons of God (Rom 8:12-17). **Since we are His sons, the avenue of communication with God our Father has been opened to us.**

2.- The Spiritual Man or Woman

When we were born again – accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – **it was our spirit man that was made alive** and enabled to communicate with God (Rom 6:11,13; 1Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1,5; 1Pet 3:18).

Our minds (souls) are in the process of being transformed and renewed: *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* (Rom 12:2).

Our bodies will be replaced with supernatural bodies when we go to be with Jesus in Heaven:

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1Cor 15:42-44).

Our mind is being renewed, and our body will one day be replaced; but it is our spirit that is born again, once dead in sin but now alive in Christ (Eph 2:1-9)! Clearly, the Scriptures state that the lines of communication with God are now open.

This **communication is a two-way dialogue** in that we speak, and He hears. More importantly, a promise is made that when He speaks, we will have the ability to hear: *“For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual”* (1Cor 2:11-13). **Be reminded that Jesus said we will be able to hear Him so that we may follow Him** (John 10:27).

3.- The Natural Man

The individual who rejects the gift of God in Christ and is not born again is referred to as a **natural man**: *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1Cor 2:14).

The natural man can understand only with his mind (soul). Therefore, it is impossible for him to understand the spiritual things of God.

What a great joy, privilege, and benefit it is to be able to communicate with our Father in Heaven, even as children communicate with their earthly fathers. All of this is available because we are born-again and now have the "mind of Christ." Through the wisdom of God, great and precious gifts and promises are made available to every believer who would choose, by faith, to walk in the provisions He has made through His Son, Jesus Christ!

6.- OUR POSITION IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The study of the work of the Holy Spirit or Anointing is beyond the scope of this article, for further teaching on this subject, please see the article entitled **The Anointing**.

1.- The Holy Spirit Makes You Relevant as A Son!

The work of the Holy Spirit cannot be over-estimated. **The Spirit's work is essential in salvation, the Spirit's work is essential in the Call to ministry, and the Spirit's work is essential in doing the ministry.**

Human hands alone cannot do the work that God wants to do in you and through you. God-sized work can only be done by God, the Holy Spirit. We need the authority and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to become the man or woman He has called us to be. We also need The Holy Spirit's supernatural authority and power to do the ministry He has called us to.

Jesus clearly saw our need when He promised to send the "Helper" to us after He ascended to the right hand of the Father. "Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

1. **The Spirit of Truth** "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:15-18).
2. **The Spirit of Teaching** "But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).
3. **The Spirit of Jesus** "But when the **Helper** comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26).
4. **The Spirit of Conviction** "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).

2.- The Work Of The Holy Spirit Is Doctrinal – The Holy Spirit working in and through the believer is part of the basic truths (doctrines) of Christianity. The operation of the Holy Spirit is prophetic in the Gospels

- 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt 3:11).
- 'I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).
- "John answered, saying to all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'" (Luke 3:16).
- "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'" (John 1:33).

3.- The Work of The Holy Spirit Is To Be Experienced – This means that the anointing produces some outward sign. The signs of renewal in your life are:

- **Boldness** - “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).
- **Miracles in the marketplace** - “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it” (Acts 4:16).
- **Conflicts** - “And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18).
- **Seen and heard – experienced it** - “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

4.- The Work Of The Holy Spirit Is Practical

1. **Sealed** – a down payment or deposit - “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:13-14).
2. **Indwells** – never leave you or forsake you - “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor 6:19-20).
3. **Filled** – to be led and empowered for service by the Holy Spirit
 - a. “And they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).
 - b. “Then Peter, **filled** with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel” (Acts 4:8).
 - c. “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be **filled** with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:17)
 - d. “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be **filled** with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

5.- The Work Of The Holy Spirit In Salvation- The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, defines righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit's work produces recognition of the need to repent and believe in the Gospel message.

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is involved in **drawing a person to Christ** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).
2. When a person makes a decision to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, following repentance and believing, that individual becomes a New Creation (2Cor 5:17), **the Holy Spirit comes to live in that individual and empowers them to live the Christian (Christ-like) life**. Without the Holy Spirit at work in the individual, a person can only imitate how

a Christian should live; in a sense, they confirm by their own efforts alone to traditions and expectations of others. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is the only one who can "transform" an individual through the renewing of the mind, a work of the Holy Spirit on the inside of an individual (Rom 12:2).

3. The **Holy Spirit is the down payment** or proof that we belong to Jesus (2Cor 1:22, Eph 1:13, Eph 4:30).
4. The door of open communication is the result of the Holy Spirit. We can speak to God, and He speaks to us. **We are able to know His will through His Holy Spirit** (1Cor 2:10-16).

6.- OUR POSITION IN RELATION TO THE BIBLE

The Bible is truly the Word of God, and all of it is given by the inspiration of God (2Tim 3:16,17; 2Pet 1:19-21). It is like no other book. **It is a spiritual book designed by God to be a source of life, inspiration, instruction, encouragement, correction, direction, and guidance for His children.** Someone once described the Bible as a personal love letter from God to us. God and His heart for mankind are revealed throughout the Scriptures. For those who do not know God, through Jesus Christ, it is an invitation to know Him. For those who walk with Jesus, the Word of God is our strength and assurance that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

1.- Rhema And Logos

It is interesting that the Bible refers to itself as the Word. "Word" in the New Testament is derived from two Greek words, **logos** and **rhema**. The word **logos** is the *written* word or an expression of thought. The word **rhema** is the *spoken* word, or a word uttered in speech or writing. Both words are used throughout the New Testament.

The significance of the word **rhema** is that it applies to a single scripture or scriptural principle that is **brought to mind by the Holy Spirit** in our time of need. It is as if the Scripture passage is "speaking" to us to answer a question or provide direction or guidance. Hence, Scripture itself tells us that it is alive and sharper than any two-edged sword, able to discern thoughts of the mind and motives of the heart. *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb 4:12).

God can speak to us so clearly through the Bible. God speaks in general principles for life (**logos**) as well as to specific circumstances in life (**rhema**). It is important to remember that we must daily be engaged in reading the **logos** (written) word. From this daily reading of the **logos**, God will give us His **Rhema** (spoken) word.

2.- The Bible As A Mirror Into Your Soul

The Bible **reveals the truth about** us. We may be able to deceive others, and we may even be able to deceive ourselves. Yet there is power in the Word of God to reveal the truth about our lives. The Word of God is compared to a mirror, which reflects where our lives need to be changed (Jas 1:23-25).

This revelation is a work of the Holy Spirit – not to discourage us or condemn us, but to bring us into the light that transforms. **God cannot bless what He does not approve** of. He is a Holy God! When He reveals painful truths about our lives, His desire for us is to bring us into paths of righteousness so that we might receive the full blessing of God. *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (2Cor 3:18).

Of course, just knowing the truth is not the same as **knowing and doing the truth**. We are called to be **doers of the Word**. By doing the Word of God, we build a solid foundation for our lives. *“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does”* (Jas 1:23-25).

3.- The Word Of God Is Spiritual

Most of us would not like to admit that sometimes we find ourselves bored, distracted, disinterested, or too tired to read or study the Word of God. We might go through the motions but often feel guilty and condemned for not being more eager in seeking the Lord in the Word. The truth is that while we may not seem to be benefiting in our minds and intellect, **our spirit is never tired, bored, or distracted**. When we study the Bible, we feed our minds, yes – but more importantly, we **feed our spirits**. Remember, the spirit does not depend upon emotions or clarity of mind.

For example, have you ever had the experience of knowing a Scripture verse while at the same time being unaware of where or how you learned it? It could have been while reading the Bible or hearing a sermon or message when the mind was not paying attention, but our spirit was hungry for the Word! The discipline of spending time reading the Word of God cannot be over-emphasized and should not be connected to how you feel. The Bible is food to the spirit! The study and devotional time we spend in the Word of God should be a time we eagerly seek for the sake of our spirit and the mind. The spirit is always willing; it is the flesh that may be weak. Therefore, **the spirit always benefits from the Word of God**, even when the flesh seems unwilling.

That is not to say that there is no benefit to the mind when we read the Scriptures. For it is clear from the Word that our minds must be renewed. *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* (Rom 12:2; see also Ephesians 5:26).

We must be careful at this point. **Many fall into the error of thinking that through the intellectual knowledge of the Word they are able to change**. Many try to live by the standards of the Bible through self-discipline and a change of only outward behavior. However, the change that God seeks is *a change of heart*, a change of our inner nature. **This change can only be accomplished as we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit**.

The Bible has the power to show us God's expectations or standards. At the same time, it shows us how helpless we are in our own strength alone to fulfill the standards of the Word of God. We are **unable in our natural strength to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus**. Yet we have the **supernatural ability**, through the Holy Spirit, to accomplish what is impossible in our own strength!

On the one hand, the Bible reveals everything about us. We may hide our secret thoughts and motives from other people. **But nothing is hidden before God**. His Word reveals that truth to us: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account"* (Heb 4:12,13). The Bible also reveals God's expectation **that we would be conformed to the image of His Son** – in other words, that we would be like Jesus. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"* (Rom 8:28,29).

Finally, the Bible reveals how God will do this work. *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* (Phil 2:12,13). It is the Lord Himself who wills or gives you both the **desire** and **the ability** to do, or the empowerment to fulfill, His good pleasure. His "good pleasure" consists of the plans and purposes for your life. This is God's grace or favor.

7.- CONCLUSION TO CONFIDENCE IN JESUS

Our cornerstone

We understand that Jesus and our relationship with Him must be the cornerstone of our lives and ministry. As we have said before, in any building, physical or spiritual, the most important step is establishing the cornerstone. The cornerstone is vital to establishing a firm foundation because everything in ministry is built upon that Cornerstone.

PART 2 - CONFIDENCE IN THE CALL

1.- OUR FOUNDATION – CONFIDENCE IN THE CALL OF GOD

If we accept that our personal relationship with Jesus is the **cornerstone of ministry**, then the **Call of God to ministry is the foundation that is built upon it**.

The Call of God is the key to building a ministry or fulfilling an assignment with **God** in the midst. No one else will be able to sustain you in the difficulties of ministry unless you are sure, **beyond any doubt**, that **God is the one who has called you to the ministry**.

It is this confidence in the call of God that enables us to do the work of the ministry with an **anointing**, the Holy Spirit empowering us. The three areas that we will examine in relation to building confidence in the Call of God are:

1. Having the assurance that the **Lord has called us**.
 - Defining Personal Revelation
2. Knowing whom we have been **called to**, our ministry assignment.
 - Recognizing truth in the midst of lies in our World View
3. Recognizing that we are called to be ministers of the **New Covenant**.
 - Our Gospel is simple and must be pure and not mixed with other philosophies or cultural traditions.

2.- CALL TO MINISTRY –

The call to ministry, as the phrase implies, **is the call of God to an individual to partner with Him in a particular ministry or assignment**. One does not choose the ministry; **God chooses the individual for the ministry**. Whatever ministry or assignment God calls one to, **He also enables** that individual by His Holy Spirit to accomplish the work.

1. **When God calls, He does not make mistakes.** “For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable” (Rom 11:29).
2. **God does not look at the outside of an individual** in terms of natural talents and abilities. God looks at the heart “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*” (1Cor 1:26).
3. **The call to ministry involves many challenges**, but we must never forget the privilege we have to serve Him. “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,” (Eph 4:1).
4. **The call to ministry involves the power of the Holy Spirit.** “Therefore, we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with **power**,” (2Thes 1:11).

3.- EXAMPLES OF THE CALL TO MINISTRY

A. Jesus’ Call to Ministry- In Jesus’ life, we see a very clear series of events leading to His ministry on Earth.

1. **The Training-** In the Gospel of Luke, we discover that, as a boy, Jesus was always attentive to the teachings in the temple. Jesus recognized early that He was to be about His Father's business (Luke 2:46-49). Then it is said, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).
2. **The Baptism-** Jesus fulfilled all righteousness in His baptism by John the Baptist. At this time, He received the Holy Spirit, and all heard the Father say, “You are My Beloved Son; in You I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22).

3. **The Testing-** “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1). Although Jesus was filled with the Spirit, it was Jesus’ character that was being tested.
4. **The Victory** “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all” (Luke 4:14-15).
5. **The Calling** Jesus knew the **people He was called to**, He knew He was to **preach the Gospel**, He knew He had a **message of freedom and liberty**, and finally, He **knew He was anointed for the task**. In Luke 4:18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".
6. It was the anointing, or the work of the Holy Spirit, that enabled Jesus to do the ministry. Although Jesus is God, He chose to function as a man and **needed the Holy Spirit to move in supernatural power**. How can we expect to do any less?

B. The Apostle Paul’s Call to Ministry

No one would argue that apart from Jesus, the Apostle Paul was the most influential person God used to establish His Church. He was responsible for the 13 Epistles of the Bible. His ministry established that the Gentiles were part of God's plan of redemption. Read (listen) carefully this brief statement of Paul's in 1Tim 1:12 and notice the areas I have highlighted and the accompanying comments: **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry”**.

1. “Our Lord”

- Lordship of Jesus Christ- **Paul saw Jesus as his King**. That meant whatever Jesus said, through the Holy Spirit, Paul did without questioning or complaining. He served with Joy despite the many hardships he suffered, and you can see that in 2Cor 11:22-33.
- Paul called Jesus Lord because he had **confidence** in his personal relationship with Him!

2. “Enabled Me”

The spiritual nature of God's ministry

- Paul understood that **without the Holy Spirit, he was no different from a merchant or businessman depending on skill, wit, or technique to sell a product**.
- Like Paul, we have something much more valuable to give away, the Gospel. We are **empowered** by the **Holy Spirit** to do the ministry supernaturally.
- As with Paul, God's intent for you in ministry is **Confidence** as a result of walking by faith consistently.

3. “Counted me Faithful”

1. Paul was faithful to be a **voice for God and not simply an echo of other men, repeating what others had said**.
2. **Paul was faithful to examine his own life and motives**.
 - Paul was a man of **integrity and honesty**
 - Paul **not only taught about the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, but he lived by the Fruit of the Holy Spirit** (Gal 5:22).

3. Paul was faithful to behave as a son.
 - In his **obedience**
 - In his use of the **Gifts of the Holy Spirit** (1Cor 12).

4. “Putting Me Into The Ministry” (Calling)

Paul did not choose the ministry; **God chose the minister.**

- Paul knew beyond doubt that **his calling was of God and not of man.**
- Paul knew that **God does not make mistakes**

C. The Disciples Call To Ministry

The 12 disciples were also individually called to follow Jesus in the Gospels, given authority in Jesus' name (Luke 10:19), breathed on to receive salvation (John 20:22), and baptized in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). All of this is to be ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of love, forgiveness, and acceptance.

- Jesus said in John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

4.- THE LORD HAS CALLED US

The Call to ministry is not a vocation or a profession, although some may see it that way. **The Call to ministry is a divine invitation** by our Father in Heaven to be part of the **spiritual leadership of His church.**

God sees something in you that you may not be able to discern in yourself. It is not your outward appearance or special talents, skills, or abilities that He needs; He needs a willing heart. **A heart that will do all He asks you to do**, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, **who will do all My will**” (Acts 13:22).

The Father is also looking **for someone who will “shepherd” His flock with love and care.** **The Father’s love** is what sets Christianity apart from all the world’s religions.

Finally, God is **looking for a leader who will be sensitive to the promptings and leadings of His Holy Spirit.** God is not looking for someone to simply lead His church; God is looking for someone who will lead His church **His way.** Doing things God's way means there must be open communication between God and the leader. God's leader must be open to receiving **personal revelation** from Him.

1.- Personal Revelation

In Matthew 16:13-17, there is an account when Jesus confronted His disciples with a profound question, **“Who do people say that I am?”** They immediately responded with what others were saying, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Then Jesus probes with a deeper question, **"Who do you say I am"?** For over 2000 years, every believer has had to deal with this question. Who is Jesus to me? Is He a religious figure, a prophet, a good teacher, or someone else? After Jesus asked this vital question, **Peter answered the following, "You are the Christ (Messiah, Savior), the Son of the living God."**

This is, of course, the answer Jesus was looking for, but what Jesus wanted all of them to see, then and now, was that it was not through logic or intellectual understanding that Peter came up with the answer. Jesus says, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar- Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, **but My Father who is in heaven."** **That is personal revelation!** It is when **God, by His Spirit, makes known to your spirit something you could not possibly know or understand on your own.**

Jesus will build His church, and He has given us the keys to the Kingdom. **The keys to the Kingdom are faith and personal revelation,** "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

The Bible and Personal Revelation

God is the author of the Bible, and God himself gave personal revelation to the writers of the Bible.

- "All Scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).
- The Apostle Paul said, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the **revelation** of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

2.- When Does Personal Revelation Come?

As a believer in Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit; therefore, you have eyes, ears, and a mind to comprehend spiritual things. "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'. 10 **But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.** For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

By faith we believe that the Word is true; therefore, we believe and act upon the Word of God. **Personal revelation can come at any time during:**

1. Prayer time,
2. Meditation time,
3. Scripture reading time and
4. During preaching and teaching

God can reveal His will even in **circumstances** because He is the God of circumstances, and He is able to direct circumstances to reveal Himself and His plans.

Not every believer is called to the “5-fold” ministry described in Ephesians 4:11, **but every believer functioning** as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher **needs to make their calling sure** (2Peter 1:10).

One final and hopefully obvious point is that any “**personal revelation**” **cannot contradict the Word of God**. Throughout the ages, many believers have been led tragically astray from the truth. The enemy of our soul, the Devil, is an expert at deception, but God has given us His Word, the scriptures, and His Spirit to keep us on the path of righteousness and truth.

5.- TO WHOM AND TO WHAT HAS GOD CALLED US?

Faith Moves God, Confidence Moves Man

By way of a reminder, we are making a distinction between Faith and Confidence. The main difference is that faith is spiritual while confidence is natural or of the soul.

As a spiritual leader, we must be men and women of faith because we know that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6). **It is also true that faith begins when the will of God is known**. Therefore, faith is impossible when the will of God is not known- all the more reason to make your **calling sure**.

- “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to **make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble (2 Peter 1:10).

As a ministry leader, we are required to train, equip and lead the people God puts into our trust. **It is the outward appearance of our faith or confidence** which inspires trust in others to follow. **You cannot be a leader if no one is following you!**

All Christians are called to the Great Commission.

The Great Commission is, in simplest terms, “**To know Christ and make Him known**”! (Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:44-49, John 20:21-22). But we of the 5-fold ministry- apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11) are also **called to be gifts to the church**- the body of Christ, with the specific task of “**training-up**” the saints (believers) to **do the work of the ministry** (Eph 4:12).

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says, “**I will build My church**”! Many leaders will try to do something only Jesus can do, “Build His church.” If only Jesus is to build the church, what are we to do? **We are called to build up His people**.

So many confuse building the church with building a reputation or being successful in the eyes of fellow leaders and ministries. Our task is to **train up the men and women of God** to do the work of the ministry. This means that our ministry is to train-up others to teach, preach, evangelize, heal the sick, and cast out demons. We will address this more fully in Part 3- Confidence in the Ministry.

1.- Know Your Calling

It is of the utmost importance to know that you are in fact called to the ministry. It is also very important to know **to whom you are called** and **to where you are called**. The Apostle Paul was called to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15); the Apostle Peter called to the Jews (Gal 2:7-8). Many of the disciples traveled to foreign lands. To this day, Christianity has gone to the outermost places of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The question every individual who is called by God must answer is, "To whom and where are you called?" This question can only be **answered by personal revelation** through the Bible, prayer, and time with **Him**. Don't trust in the wisdom of man. Seek Him!

- **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you** that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My Name He may give you" (John 15:16).

You cannot afford to waver in faith your calling to the ministry. God has given us emotions, which are necessary for the soul, but **faith is not an emotion!** Faith is a spiritual decision to believe in God. If you rely on emotions, you will feel called one day and, on another day, not so sure of your calling!

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be steadfast, immovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.
- Phil 3:14 **I press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward **call** of God in Christ Jesus.

God's Timing

God's call to ministry can come at any age, at any time, and to any person. There are many who are called as children as well as in old age. While one may know they are called it is important to wait until God arranges the circumstances to fulfill the call.

We serve a God who is not constrained by time; therefore, when He speaks, it always seems like a "do it now" word. **We must be sure of the timing as well as the call.**

Sometimes because of our love and zeal for the Lord, we can run the risk of getting ahead of God. When we get ahead of Him, **we get ahead of His provision and protection** (Acts 16:6-10).

Can Man Call a Person to Ministry?

You must be sure that you were **called by God and not by a man**. Man is able to **recognize** the call, but man cannot impart the call... **the call is from God!** A call from God also means that **He is able to supply you with an anointing** from the Holy Spirit to accomplish the calling. No man can do that!

Only God, through His Holy Spirit, can reveal to you His plan and purpose for your life. The ministry is not a profession or vocation where you get to choose your "career track," but it is a calling of God to partner with Him. It is God's plan and God's way.

2.- Challenges To The Call Of God

You will face many challenges in the ministry, and it is important to recognize that it is primarily a **Spiritual Battle!** Are you **prepared, equipped, and alert** (2 Cor 10:3-6, Eph 6:10-20)? There will be attempts to undermine your authority, anointing, testimony, and reputation as God's choice as a leader.

Do You Know the Enemy, his Strategies, and his Weapons?

The Bible teaches that three **powerful enemies** seek to undermine, destroy and neutralize the Christian leader's testimony and spiritual victory. They are the Devil, the flesh, and the world. These three areas are not separate and distinct; they are blended together and work as **one force** trying to undermine and discredit the call of God on your life.

What is important to understand about Spiritual Warfare is that it is **real**, ongoing, and destructive. The most tragic mistake would be to dismiss **spiritual warfare** as myth or non-existent. Because we cannot see the spirit realm with our natural senses does not mean it is not real. The Bible affirms the reality of spiritual warfare; therefore, it would be wise to agree with the Scriptures (2 Cor 10:3-6, Eph 6:10-20).

We will take another look at Spiritual Warfare in Chapter 3, Confidence in the Ministry

Some Thoughts:

Being called to the "5-fold ministry" is about what one does, not who one is. Your identity, or who you are, is simple- **you are a child of God!** Scriptures say that you are a **son**.

The terms Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are not titles but describe the work or **function** of a person. There are those who have the title but are not performing the function of a 5-fold minister. Just as there are men and women who function in the 5-fold ministry, but don't have the title. The most important thing to remember is that you are a Son who serves in the ministry.

God Can't Bless What He Does Not Approve of.

Being called to the ministry has a great **responsibility to live righteously** and as a **genuine model of integrity and holiness** to the people, we represent. Being in the ministry is not about privilege and power but **about service and humility**.

We must behave the same when in our churches, home, and the marketplace. There is **no place for hypocrisy** or living one way in church and another way at home (Rom 12:9, James 3:17, 1Peter 2:1).

Let us never be found to **abuse or take advantage of the people God has given us** to shepherd. Manipulation, control, using guilt and shame must never be part of our ministry. **God has much to say about abusing His sheep in Jeremiah 23.**

Let us never imitate others in ministry unless they imitate Jesus' character and integrity. **In every way let us imitate Jesus Christ** (1Cor 4:15-16, 1Cor 11:1).

You are God's personal choice to do what He has called you to do. **Your King has called you** to the ministry. Don't let others try to belittle or ridicule your belief that you are Called by the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

6.- OUR CALL IS TO BE MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT

"And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as **ministers of the new covenant**, not of the letter **but of the Spirit**; for the letter kills, but the **Spirit gives life**" (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).

There are two important points in the preceding scripture that we need to look at closely:

1. We are called to be ministers of the **New Covenant**. Earlier in this article we showed that the New Covenant (New Testament) is better than and replaced the Old Covenant or the Law. This means that it is not the letter of the Law (**legalism**) that gives life, but the Spirit, which gives life- **Grace** (Eph 2:8-9).
2. **The work of the Holy Spirit** is essential in the message of the New Covenant. The Spirit or the **Holy Spirit of God gives life to the scriptures and to the believer**.
 - The Holy Spirit gives **illumination** to the Word of God (Heb 4:12).
 - It is the Holy Spirit that produces **personal revelation** (Luke 2:26, 1Cor 2:10).
 - It is the Holy Spirit that causes us to **discern Truth** (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13).

1.- Ministers of the New Covenant

As ministers of the Gospel (Good News), we must make sure that our message is a **message of grace and mercy** and that it is not a message that has been **compromised by the world or our own opinions**.

The Devil is the father of all lies; there is no truth in him (John 8:44). Deception is what he does best. The tragedy of deception is that when a person is deceived, they will not know it. **That is the nature of deception!** We see it at work in the Garden of Eden, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" The Devil created doubt by mixing a lie with truth; God actually said they could eat of any tree but one, the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." **Doubt led to deception, and deception led to sin.**

A partial truth is still a lie. A drop of poison in a glass of water poisons the entire glass of water. What this means for us as ministers is that **we cannot mix the old covenant with the new covenant**. Grace and Law will not work; even a little law will be poisonous (Rom 4:16, 5:20, 6:14-15, Gal 2:21, 5:4).

Mixing the **world's philosophy into the church** can weaken or dilute the power of the church and the working of the Holy Spirit. If there were no difference between the world and the church, why would anyone be attracted to the message of the Gospel?

7.- OUR WORLDVIEW

As pastors and leaders, an important principle that we must never lose sight of is that **experience** must never replace the **Word of God as our foundation of truth**. The Bible is God's wisdom revealed to mankind. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, "(2 Tim 3:16). While the Bible comes from God (scripture), our experiences can come from many sources, such as God, Satan, people, and the circumstances of life.

Since our view of the world is so crucial to how we live and do ministry, let us take a closer look at the definition of Worldview: **A worldview is the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world**. A worldview is a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group. Although we may not realize it, **we all have certain opinions and biases that affect how we view all of life and reality**. A worldview is like a **set of lenses for our eyes, which color our vision** or alter how we see or perceive the world around us.

Emotions and feelings often influence experiences, and these emotions and feelings can often be very misleading. Two people can have the same experience yet come to totally opposite conclusions. **For example, two brothers or sisters can have the same** parents, same home environment, and the same experiences in life. You would expect that they would have similar views and opinions, yet you know that is often not the case! Each person responds in a different way even to the same circumstances and, as a result, develops a unique view of the world, they live in.

The **Bible cautions us** to be aware of the world's view of life, "**Beware** lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). There is one overwhelming reason why so many substitute the "wisdom of the World" for the Wisdom of God and eventually go astray, leading others astray as well. It is because their Worldview has **deceived them from seeing the truth**.

Everyone Has A Worldview.

Our worldview is formed by our education, our upbringing, the society and culture we live in, the books we read, the teachers we have, the media we expose ourselves to. For many people, their worldview is simply something they have absorbed by continual contact from their surrounding influences.

A worldview is often something that is **never thought about in a systematic way**. It is something that a person believes, and yet they wouldn't be able to give a rational defense of their beliefs to others." "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1Peter 3:15). As pastors and leaders, we need to be able to defend what we believe.

Many People Have Opinions Based On Nothing More Than Feelings.

These feelings are often a result of sub-conscious peer group pressures, societal pressures, family pressures, and even media pressures. For example, what do you really believe about the morality of some pressing issues of our day? Such as: Capital punishment, Abortion, Homosexuality, Pornography, Politics, Government, Truth, Relativism, Sin, God, and Church.

The question for us is not **“Do we have a worldview?”** because we all have a worldview, but how did we come to our worldview? How did we form our opinions, and why? Are the opinions we have based on casual acceptance or carefully considered thought; or **illumination** against a **foundation of core beliefs**?

3.- A Biblical Worldview, the 10 Commandments, and the precepts of the Bible.

The foundation of core beliefs, for a Christian, must be the **10 Commandments** and the **precepts** (commands or principles intended as a general rule of action or conduct) of **the Bible**. A **Biblical worldview** is what we need to make sense of life today. As pastors and leaders, shouldn't we be proclaiming this view, a biblical worldview?

4.- Our Gospel Cannot Be Mixed With The World's View

Until our worldview becomes a Biblical worldview, we will always be blinded to God's purpose, plans, and pursuits. “But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same **veil remains unlifted** in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:14-18).

5.- World View And 7 Veils Of Deception

The world's view is a form of deception that attempts to marginalize or minimize the importance of God and His Church. The deception is very much like a veil across our eyes that prevents us from seeing clearly. The following are some brief examples of veils of deception:

1. **Veil of our sin nature (habits).** When we come to Christ, we are forgiven and become new creations (2Cor 5:17). This refers to our spirit-man; we still must overcome a lifetime of bad habits. Our sin-nature has been dealt with, but we may still have unrighteous attitudes and thoughts. This is overcome by the work of the Word and the Spirit as we are transformed by the **renewing of our minds** (Rom 12:2).
2. **Veil of family** Your family relationships (or lack of) with parents, especially your father can shape your view of your Heavenly Father. A negative family life can transfer that negativity or lack of trust for our Heavenly Father. This attitude can twist the Good News message into one that is harsh, critical, and unloving.
3. **Veil of education** As children, we tend to believe all that we are taught, and as a result we are taught values and morals that do not conform to the Bible. For example, many

schools teach that God did not create man and woman, but mankind **evolved** into its present form (Creation vs. Evolution).

4. **Veil of peers** For the sake of friendship, we tend to overlook and sometimes embrace the evil or bad behavior of others. As the Bible teaches, "bad company corrupts good morals (1Cor 15:33). Those whom we are closest to can have the greatest influence on us. **Choose your friends carefully!**
5. **Veil of culture** A subtle but powerful influence. We are not aware of it because we grow up in it. Attitudes about love, vengeance, gender, marriage, children, honesty, and integrity are built into the culture. These attitudes may be contrary to scriptures and yet widely accepted. We are called to adhere to biblical truth.
6. **Veil of tradition** Jesus addressed the issue of traditions of men. A common statement is, "It is the way we do things here!" Yes, but does it line up with the Word of God? The practice must line up with the Word of God.
7. **Veil of experience** Every individual is the sum-total of their experiences in life, and both positive and negative experience shape how we think and who we are. We are called to be **Disciples of Christ**; therefore, we should always examine our motives and behavior to make sure they are Christ-like.

6.- Know Yourself

Since so much of what we know and believe is formed by our life experiences, we can understand why the Bible stresses the importance of knowing yourself and **accurately judging yourself**. "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (1Corinthians 11:31).

Knowing yourself requires knowing the "**eyes**" one sees through in coming to the positions, opinions, beliefs, and biases that one has formed in life. This is especially important as it pertains to ministry.

Accountability

As pastors and leaders, we understand that **we will be held to a higher level of accountability for our words, actions, and decisions** before God. "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment (James 3:1).

There will be no excuse that we can give for teaching errors. Therefore, we must be very sure that what we preach and teach is the truth. Jesus says, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Well, if the truth will set one free, what will a lie or un-truth do? It should be obvious that if the truth will set us free, then a **lie will put us in bondage**. Bondage is not of God, for Jesus came so that the chains of bondage would be broken (Romans 8:15).

It really doesn't matter if the lie was intentional or unintentional, and ignorance is no excuse. A lie spoken in ignorance still has the same effect... death! Now the Word, the Bible, was given so that we would know the truth and that the truth of the Bible would set others and us free (John 8:32, 36)!

Agreement

Agreeing with a biblical worldview is one thing, but it is possible to have a set of core beliefs and be very inconsistent in the application of those core beliefs. In other words, we can say that we believe one thing and do another. **As pastors and leaders, are we living what we teach,** (Romans 2:21-24)?

The Bible teaches that to walk with God we must be in agreement with Him. "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed" (Amos 3:3)? Many may think that agreement means agreeing intellectually or mentally with God. **God is looking for more than agreement in mind;** He is looking for agreement in action and obedience! This is true of all believers and especially true of pastors and leaders because we are responsible for what we teach in words and **our example.**

7.-A Critical Question

As ministers of the Gospel, **a critical question arises,** are we preaching, teaching, counseling, and modeling a biblical worldview?

Today many are presenting as truth personal opinion, secular humanism, and other forms of the "traditions of men." Remember, the Apostle Paul cautions the Church against ministers with a non-biblical worldview when he says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

It takes faith and courage to go against the flow of popular opinion and be a man or woman of conviction. As ministers and as individuals, if we don't stand for a biblical worldview, we will be led astray by anything that is popular! Today's culture puts pressure on us to be "tolerant." This tolerance often expresses itself as "all things are permitted" or "I think it's wrong, but I wouldn't judge someone else for doing it." **Compromise is always wrong when it means sacrificing biblical principles.**

When the precepts of a biblical worldview make up the "lens" through which we see life and the world, it becomes so much easier to know why and what our calling should be in ministry and in life. While the first step is to know the truth, we are also faced with the daily responsibility of doing and teaching what we know to be true.

9.- CONCLUSION:

Knowing that God has called you to the ministry will strengthen you in times of adversity.

1. His strength and authority become your strength and authority because you are committed to His will.
1. God will only bless that which He ordains or approves of.
2. Knowing that you are called means that you are less likely to be distracted by the world, Satan, or the flesh.
3. God's New Covenant, which was purchased by the blood of Jesus, is the basis of our strategy in life and ministry.

PART 3 - CONFIDENCE IN THE MINISTRY

1.- CONFIDENCE IN DOING THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

By now, as each of you know, **doing the ministry is not as easy as it looked** before you stepped into God's calling. **That is because the ministry is not simply about learning a job or a vocation.** Ministry is more than learning how to do certain things like teaching, preaching, evangelism, weddings, and funerals. There is a very important component that is required and often overlooked, and it is **called spiritual discernment**. Are we connected, tuned in to the Spirit of God? The ministry is a **spiritual calling to operate in the spiritual realm**.

A Spiritual Ministry

With most natural jobs, careers, or professions, it is about applying certain talents or skills to accomplish a task. For instance, to be a medical doctor requires years of training in skills and techniques in order to be a competent doctor. The ministry requires competence as well as something else. That something else is a personal connection to Jesus through the Holy Spirit. **Jesus says clearly, "I will build my church"** (Matthew 16:18). Therefore, we need to get our instructions for building the ministry from Jesus. We must learn to do things His way (Isa 55:8-9).

With or For Jesus

Many of us try to build a church or ministry for Jesus. What we are really doing is building what we *think* Jesus would want; a church building or office, organization, reputation, finances or business. The church (Ministry) is not about any of these things. The church or **ministry is all about the people** Jesus died for and set free from sin and death.

Serving or Being Served

The word ministry is from the original Greek word- Diakonia, which means "servant." We are called to be **servants** to God's church. The word church is from the Greek- ekklēsia, which means "the called-out ones". We demonstrate our love for God by serving His called-out ones or believers in Jesus Christ. **Ministry is not about being served but serving His people.**

Leaning on Your Own Understanding

An important way ministry is different from a job or profession is that in a natural job, in the beginning, you learn the methods and techniques. Someone teaches you, and after a while, you

don't need the teacher or mentor anymore; **you can do it on your own**. Eventually, you don't even have to think about how to do it anymore; you just know how to do it.

Leaning on your own understanding of the spirit realm is not God's way of building His church or ministry. God has called us to acknowledge Him in all our doings (Proverbs 3:5-8). Remember, Jesus builds the church; you build up His people. You must stay in communication with the Holy Spirit of God to do your part effectively and for the glory of God.

If you don't maintain that personal relationship and communication with God, you will fall into all kinds of ministry troubles. You must also be aware, but not afraid, that you have an enemy who wants to destroy your relationship with Jesus, your calling, and your ministry.

2.- THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY IS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE!

Jesus comes to give; Satan comes to take, (John 10:10).

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

The Devil, the Flesh, and the World have their power in trying to make us sin. Sin causes us, as human beings, to run from God because of the guilt, shame, and regret that sin produces in us. This statement begs the question, "what is sin?" The most common definition of sin is "to fall short of the mark." **God sets the moral standard, and we sin when we miss or fall short of God's expectations.**

The greatest sin is the sin of unbelief. To reject Jesus as the only means of salvation is the sin of eternal consequences. Many of the sins (actions of unrighteousness) are symptomatic of a separation from God. **We often point to the symptoms and do not deal with the root cause-unbelief.**

The Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:19-23) shows this 3-pronged warfare.

1. **The wicked one or the Devil- His Strategy:** "19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the **wicked one** comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside".

SATAN (Devil) comes in with doubt and deception and destroys the "seed"

- The Devil's plan is to cause us to **rebel** against God. To deny Him and what He has done for us.
- The Devil is the "whisperer," leading us astray by **putting thoughts into our minds**. His goal is to convince us that we determine our own destiny and that God does not.

- The Devil will try to convince us that “the **end justifies the means.**” This lie means that as long as our goals are good, we can use any means, even sinful means to obtain the goal. Many ministers have fallen because they looked for a shortcut to success.

God’s Strategy Over The Devil- The weapon of our warfare- JESUS!

- **Victory** over Satan and his demons is through Jesus, who came to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).
- We have the God-given option of choosing Jesus over the Devil. Whom we choose is whom we serve (Romans 6:16). If we reject Jesus and His ways, we by default, choose Satan or the Devil.
- His grace is sufficient for the task at hand. Jesus said that He would build His church... we don't need help by resorting to the enemy of God or his methods.
- Because of His love for us (demonstrated by the cross), we can trust Him.
- His love motivates us to love and **live** for Him. Thus, destroying the work of the enemy.

2. The Flesh- Devil’s Strategy: “20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself but endures only for a while. **For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles”.**

- The **FLESH**, being weak and inconsistent, abandons the "seed" before it has time to germinate. The Devil uses the "Flesh" to tempt us to sin by appealing to that which gives us pleasure. He corrupts and abuses our natural drives and urges, which in turn cause us to serve our own wants and desires and turn away from God. You cannot serve two masters, and you cannot serve yourself or selfish desires and expect the Holy Spirit to empower you.

God’s Strategy Over The Flesh- The Holy Spirit

- **Victory** over the flesh is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Being Spirit influenced or controlled overcomes the lust of the flesh. “Walk in the Spirit and **you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh**” (Gal 5:16). We always have to ask the question in our ministry, “What would Jesus do”? Then do it!

3. The World– Devil’s Strategy “22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he, who hears the word, and **the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful”.**

The **WORLD**, attractions and temptations of the world system, the “seed” may germinate, but no fruit is produced because the “seed” is neglected.

- The Devil uses the distractions of the world to tempt us to distract us from God, forget about God, or even ignore God.
- Some of the world's distractions as it pertains to ministry are the drive for success at any cost, the fear of failure, the pursuit of money, the pursuit of fame and reputation, and the acceptance of other ministry leaders.

- If we become caught up in the "cares" of the world, by default, we will overlook the power of the Kingdom of God.

God's Strategy Over The World- The Love Of The Father

- **Victory** over the world is through the love of the Father. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Life in the ministry is about self-sacrifice and loving the unlovable. God's kind of love is about living your life for someone for the good of others.
 - God's idea of success or way of doing ministry is often the opposite of the world's concept of success. Jesus on the cross of Calvary looked like a disastrous mistake to all at the time. Yet it was the most significant act in the history of mankind. God knows what He is doing; trust Him (Romans 8:28).

God's Intention for All Of Us- The Good Ground

"23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty".

- When we hear, understand, and do the Word, the "seed" is protected from the Devil, planted in rich soil, cultivated and produces plentiful fruit of Christian works glorifying God!
- Jesus has promised to send us a Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-18).
- Because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are given Spiritual Eyes to See and Ears to Hear spiritual things (Matthew 13:16-17, 1Corinthians 2). We need to depend upon getting God's direction for the ministry.
- Hearing what the Holy Spirit wants us to do is not the same as **doing** what the Holy Spirit is directing us to do. We must learn to become Spirit-led (**controlled**) leaders!

3.- THE BATTLEFIELD IS OFTEN IN OUR OWN MINDS

1.- Satan's Tool Is To Tempt You To Abandon God's Calling, Ministry And Lean On Your Own Understanding

- "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones (Proverbs 3:5-8).
- "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

2.- Our Spiritual Battle Requires Us To Discern Satan's Lies And Tear Them Down.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for **pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6** and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

1. **A truly Biblical worldview is essential to recognizing the schemes, wiles, and trickery of the Devil.** It is not enough to know what a proper Biblical view should be but to also live in a way that demonstrates that worldview.
2. As a ministry leader, we must present evidence that we have a Biblical worldview. Therefore, **we must embrace what God has said in His Scriptures and live as one who believes the following:**
 - a. God is for you and not against you. (Romans 8:31)
 - b. God will never leave you nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5-6)
 - c. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. (Philippians 4:13)
 - d. You are a son and have tremendous value to God and His purposes. (Galatians 3:26, 4:6)
 - e. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. (1John 4:4)
 - f. The Holy Spirit is YOUR helper... you are not in the ministry alone. (John 14:16, 26)
 - g. You are God's ambassador and given authority to minister. (2Corinthians 5:20)
 - h. Because of Him, you are not powerless (Acts 1:8)
3. The Devil would try to convince you that these things are not true for you. The Devil is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). He would love to weaken you, discourage you, and dismiss you as insignificant. The truth is **you are God's choice**, and He is with you if you will follow him!

3.- What Are Some of The Lies Satan Would Like Us to Believe?

1. **Feelings of unworthiness to be in the ministry.**
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:17 states that you are a new creation in Christ Jesus, the old has passed away, and all things have become new. Stop focusing on the old man of the past and see what God sees, a new creation. You can now say, as Paul the Apostle said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12).
2. **Feelings of inadequacy as a leader.**
 - a. Everyone in the ministry feels inadequate when they are working in their own strength. Jesus said that His grace is sufficient for every situation (2Corinthians 12:9, 1Corinthians 1:26-31).
3. **Allowing negative opinions of others to discourage you.**
 - a. Here is some simple advice. Listen to whatever others have to say, good or bad. Then, if what you hear is true- do something about it. If it is not true- let it pass in one ear and out the other.
 - b. If you allow the opinions of others to influence you, then you are under their control.
4. **Doubts as to whether you were called to do the work of the ministry.**
 - a. What has been a help to many is to "write the vision down" (Hab 2:2-3). In other words, to keep a journal as a reminder of the things God has said to you and the circumstances He has ordered. When doubt comes, read out loud what you have written as a testimony and encouragement to you.
5. **Feelings that you are a poor teacher or preacher.**

- a. Look at the testimony of Paul, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).
- 6. Feelings that you do not have enough training.**
 - a. Look at the testimony of Peter and John, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).
- 7. Feelings of failure for not producing a great successful ministry.**
 - a. Jesus shares a Parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16. In this parable, a great number of workers are hired at different times of the day. Some work a full day, others work a very short time, and yet they are all paid the same amount at the end of the day. We all get to share in the same reward no matter how "big" or "small" our contribution is. All of it is important to the Kingdom of God.
 - b. Not everyone is chosen to build a "great" ministry. You may be called to build a ministry so that others may come along and build upon the foundation you have built. We need to have a "Kingdom" mindset.
- 8. Uncertain of the anointing on your life.**
 - a. The anointing of God is not a feeling or an emotion; it is the power and authority of God. What we must look at are the results, not how we feel. Are people being saved, healed, delivered, encouraged, and trained-up to do the ministry? If so, then you have an anointing!

These feelings and emotions are common to all who are in the ministry. Very few ministers would admit it, but it is true. Very often, the battle is "**between our ears.**" Our emotions are not always based on truth. Feelings come and go, but truth, the Word of God, and what He says about you is unchanging.

4.- You Are Anointed To Do The Ministry

The study of the anointing is beyond the scope of this article. For further teaching on this subject please see the ACTS article entitled **The Anointing.**

The word anointing is often misunderstood.

To understand the Anointing, we must distinguish between **Styles of ministry** from the driving **Power of ministry.** We must be careful to separate the theatrics from the substance. The anointing is of the Holy Spirit and not man. We often mix "charismatic personality" with the work of the Holy Spirit.

The terms theatrics or charismatic personality is not meant to be a negative comment. We all have personalities and ways of doing ministry that come across as a particular style. Some

ministers exaggerate every word and gesture, and other ministers are calm and subdued. Most ministers fall in between the two extremes. What is important to see is that **style alone is not the anointing of God**.

The **anointing of God** is the actual **working of the Holy Spirit** through an individual. A good definition is as follows; "The anointing is the person and presence of the Holy Spirit, bringing with His presence all the necessary power, gifts and authority that are needed to fulfill the Father's will at a given moment of ministry or assignment".

- Let us clarify each keyword- The anointing (Holy Spirit) is the person (God) and presence (manifest) of the Holy Spirit, bringing with His presence all of the necessary power (supernatural), gifts (favor) and authority (right) that are needed to fulfill the Father's will at a given moment of ministry (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher) or assignment (other than 5-fold ministry).

The anointing is simply the work of the Holy Spirit regardless of whom the Holy Spirit chooses to use.

If you are Called, you are anointed by God to do what He has called you to do! Only God, through His Holy Spirit, can redeem, reconcile, heal, deliver and set people free. You are His vessel, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (2Cor 4:7). God's purpose and plan is to work through you with His anointing.

Doing the ministry God has called us to requires the guidance, leading, and power of the Holy Spirit. God's thoughts and ways are higher than man's, but God has given us His Holy Spirit to discern His ways (Isa 55:8-9, 1Cor 2:10-16). Because we are representing Jesus, we need the authority and power of His Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). This authority and power of the Holy Spirit to do God's will is the **anointing**.

1. "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has **anointed** us *is* God," (2cor 1:21).
2. "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has **anointed** You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions" (Heb 1:9).
3. "But you have an **anointing** from the Holy One, and you know all things" (1John 2:20).
4. "But the **anointing** which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same **anointing** teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1john 2:27).

Our responsibility is to **plant seeds** (Gospel) and **water** the growing plants (ministry), but **it is God who gives the increase** (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). The moment we begin to think that the anointing is our tool to use for our purpose is the moment we miss God's purpose and plan for our lives and ministry. Only God can build the ministry.

4.- THE PATTERN FOR BUILDING A MINISTRY

As the Apostle Paul was speaking to the church, he stated the following, "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

4. We are "**God's fellow workers**" in the ministry. What a glorious thought that is! We are not just working for God but working with Him. When we use the word ministry, we often think of the "five-fold ministry" Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Now, remember what Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I **chose you** and **appointed** (ordained) you that you should go and **bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain**, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).
4. **What does it mean to bear fruit that remains?** To understand this phrase, we must look at this issue from God's perspective. As ministers, we often think about attendance and finances as a measure of success or producing fruit that remains. While attendance and finances are necessary for successful ministry, these things are not at the center of God's heart. John 3:16 clearly states God's heart, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." God has made His desire known, and that desire is for the redemption, through Jesus Christ, of every person from every tribe and nation on the earth. The ministry is how He will accomplish this great commission through you.

5.- THE PATTERN FOR MINISTRY

The scriptures in **Ephesians 4:11-16** gives us the pattern we need to follow in order to build the church or ministry.

1. **Verse 11-** Jesus gave **5 gifts to the church**, and they are the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher.
 - Keep in mind that these names describe **functions** rather than titles. It is common to find people that don't have the title but are very effective in performing God's function. The opposite is true also, there are those who have the title but are not performing God's function.
2. **Verse 12-** Two important functions that all the five-fold ministry gifts have in common is to "**equip the saints to do the work of the ministry** and to **edify the body of Christ**."
 - God has not called us to do the ministry by ourselves. Even Jesus trained 12 disciples, who in turn trained others to reach the entire world. If your vision for ministry is all about you- you have a very small vision.
 - Ministry is about edifying, encouraging, and equipping the believers to do the work of the ministry. Ministry is not about you doing everything. By training others to do what you do, you are in effect multiplying the impact of your ministry and the Kingdom of God.

- We make the greatest impact upon our community when we train others to do what we do. We should be training and creating opportunities for our members to preach, teach, evangelize, intercede, heal the sick, cast our demons, and continue the ministry's reach by training them to be trainers of others.
3. **Verse 13-** The goal of the ministry is threefold: "till we all come to the **unity of the faith** and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect man, to the measure of the **stature of the fullness of Christ**"
 - a. To work towards producing maturity and **agreement with God's truths** (Colossians 2:2-3).
 - b. To help others to come to the **Knowledge of Jesus**. This means we are helping others to establish a **personal relationship** with Jesus through the Holy Spirit (John 17:3).
 - c. To the **measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ** means to be like Jesus in character and integrity, illustrated by the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). As well as authority and power demonstrated by the Gifts of the Spirit (1Corinthians 12: 4-11).
 4. **Verse 14-** Describes what to avoid in the ministry. "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and **carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."
 - a. Because of evil in the world we must discern between righteousness and unrighteousness. In Colossians 2:8 the Apostle Paul states, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1-4, Hebrews 5:12-14).
 5. **Verse 15-** What to seek to establish in the ministry. Love and to become like Christ "but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ."
 - a. As God is love (1John 4:8), we should be because of Jesus in us. We are to be conformed to be like Jesus, "29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29). (Romans 12:9-21, 1Peter 1:22)
 6. **Verse 16-** Why we need one another in the ministry? The body of Christ (the Church) is made up of many parts, dependent upon one another for growth and edification. "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share, causes growth of the body** for the edifying of itself in love". (1Corinthians 12:12-27, Colossians 2:19)

As we co-labor with the Lord and **focus on His agenda** we will be successful in fulfilling the call of the ministry. As we **invest our lives** into the people God sends to us, the Lord will do His part and invest in us (Matthew 6:33-34).

As ministry leaders, we must be helping others to be successful in life and in the church. The way we accomplish this is to be an inspiration of "Hope, Healing and Wholeness" to the Body of Christ.

6.- BECOMING A VOICE FOR GOD AND NOT AN ECHO OF MAN

When we start in ministry, it is only natural that we try to emulate or copy others in the ministry whom we admire or look up to. We may have mentors or teachers who taught us how to do the ministry and, as a result, pick up their characteristics. Sometimes we will try to dress like them or speak like them or even imitate their mannerisms.

In the extreme, some think that by imitating an anointed individual is the way to move in the anointing. Those that do so soon discover that the anointing is not the same as a “**style of ministry**.” Style has to do with your personality; anointing has to do with the outworking of the Holy Spirit. **Your style is your work; the anointing is God’s work.**

1. As human beings, we naturally "seek the path of least resistance" or, put another way, we look for the easiest way to do something. It only makes sense that we would do this in ministry too. So, we read books and look at what other ministries are doing. We try to **copy** what has worked for others only to discover that it usually doesn't work for us. There is only one way to get direction, guidance, and clarity in God's purpose, plan, and process for you and your ministry. **You must look to Him!**
2. You are a unique creation (Psalms 139:14), **God’s plan for you is unique** as well. You cannot expect God's plan for another person to work for you! And yet we often look to others for that which only God through His Holy Spirit can give. When God uses an anointed person for healing, who does the healing? Is it the person, or is it the Spirit of God working through the person? To have an anointed ministry requires an anointed minister. An anointed minister is one who is led by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. **What Does It Mean To Be An Echo Of Man?** When we begin in ministry, we often look for direction from man (books, tapes, CDs, recorded messages, conference speakers, etc.). Remember, it is natural to seek the easy way, but there is only one way to get direction from God, and that is through Him. Yes, this is the more difficult path, but **it is the only way to experience confidence in the ministry**. I might add that following God this way is also an **adventure**, for you don't know where it will lead.
 - b. **What Does It Mean To Be A Voice For God?** Once you become comfortable in allowing God to lead you in the ministry you discover that **you can simply be yourself!** There is no greater joy in ministry than working with God and being yourself. No facades or masks or feeling like a hypocrite; you are simply a son working with his Father. As you examine God's great men and women, you discover that they had a personal dynamic relationship with God. They did what Jesus did; they did what their Father in Heaven showed them to do.
3. **The Spirit-Led Ministry:** Jesus **promised**, in Luke 11:9-13, that if we would continue to ask, seek and knock, we would receive the Holy Spirit. That means that we need to put what we

trusted in aside and **rely on the Holy Spirit**. We are reminded of the promise again in Acts 1:4. Then Jesus states a fact, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

4. **The Challenge:** "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). To paraphrase, "Don't be controlled by worldly wisdom which will lead to wasted time and effort but be filled or **controlled** by the Holy Spirit where there is truth, wisdom, guidance, power, and authority.

There is nothing wrong with reading books, listening to others, and "**gleaning**" (gaining inspiration) from their messages. The problem is when we look to those sources or techniques in place of what God wants to do in you and through you.

5. **You Can't Give What You Don't Possess:** An **echo** can only repeat what has been uttered; a **voice** speaks from within. Acts 3:1-10 is an account of Peter and John with the lame man by the Pool Beautiful. In verse 6 "Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk". The lame man was instantly healed and gave glory to God! **Peter gave from the anointing he had**. Peter was a voice from God, and so shall you be as you give to the ministry that which you possess.

7.- CONCLUSION

The focus of this teaching on The Pastor's Call and confidence in the ministry has been on the spiritual nature of the ministry. While the spiritual side of ministry is of primary importance, we must also learn how to be **competent** in the practical aspects of ministry. In other words, we need to be **effective** in what we teach, preach or train others to do. We must not **operate out of theory** but out of what God, through His Holy Spirit, has revealed to us. Before we can teach others, we need to be sure that we have learned to do what we are trying to teach.

While we may be limited in resources and teaching materials, God is not limited in any way. Education should be pursued, but education alone will never replace the anointing of God (the work of the Holy Spirit) in and on our lives. The Apostle Paul understood this principle and made the following statement, "*And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God*" (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

The Ministry We Are Called To Is Spiritual And Relational

1. Spiritual

- The ministry should never be thought of as simply a job, career path, or profession. The ministry is an opportunity to work **with God**. We limit ourselves if we think in terms of working **for God**; we are **Sons** who are called and choose to work with God.
- Working with someone implies that there is communication between the two parties. That is why we devoted the entire Part 1 of this article to the foundation of "Confidence in Jesus Christ."
- Since God is Spirit and looking for those who will worship Him in Spirit and truth, our relationship with Him is spiritual (John 3:24).
- A close examination of 1 Corinthians chapter 2 clearly shows that God is looking for two-way communication with His believers- that is genuine spiritual communication.

3. Relational

- Ministry is all about people. That simple statement sums up what ministry is about. We in the ministry represent God; we are ambassadors for Christ (2Cor 5:20). As ambassadors, we represent the interest of God, and God's interest is in people.
- God will deal harshly with those who have been entrusted with His Church, the Bride of Christ, and abuse, misuse, or take advantage of His people (Jer 23).
- You cannot say you love God and then take advantage of those around you. *"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also"* (1John 4:20-21).

Be Yourself

One of the greatest practical challenges in the ministry is to accept who God made you to be. God chose you just as you were. While it is true that God is at work in you, renewing your mind, God's purpose and intention is to make you more like Jesus. God is not trying to make you like some personality or minister you admire. While there are some good practices and ways of doing ministry that we can learn from others. We need to be comfortable with who we are and have faith that the Holy Spirit will make up for any lack we may have.

Integrity and Truthfulness

Our integrity is a reflection of our character, and our character must be above reproach. We **represent Jesus Christ** and as such must behave, publically and privately, with the greatest morality, ethics, and righteousness.

Our integrity is an area we must never compromise. Jesus would never steal, lie, commit immorality, or behave in a way that would reflect poorly on the Father. "The ends never justify the means" if the means require us to compromise our integrity.

Finally, our ministry is not about building institutions, schools, medical clinics, feeding, and clothing the poor. These are all noble efforts, but these things should be the **outcome of our primary mission**. Our primary mission is **to make Jesus Christ known!** All of the things that are built are temporal; the personal knowledge of Jesus is eternal. Making Jesus known in a

personal way is our **calling!** In the eyes of God, our success depends upon allowing Him to work through us to reach people with the Gospel.

The End